

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CU-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07

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OPR-02 IO-11 /068 W

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R 110543Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8097

INFO AMCONSUL ASMARA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE ADDIS ABABA 1694

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINS PINT ET

SUBJECT: DISRUPTIVE STUDENT ACTIVITY CONTINUES

REF: ADDIS ABABA 1131

1. SINCE SUBMISSION OF REFTEL DISRUPTIVE STUDENT POLITICAL ACTIVITIES IN ADDIS CONTINUE AT SLIGHTLY INCREASED LEVEL. DURING FIRST WEEK IN FEBRUARY EMBASSY RECEIVED REPORTS INDICATING THAT SOME MANNER OF DISRUPTION OR DEMONSTRATION WAS HELD AT TWO OR THREE ADDIS SCHOOLS PER DAY. DURING THAT WEEK MENELIK II AND NEFAS SILK COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOLS APPEARED TO BE MOST ACTIVE. ON THURSDAY, FEB 5, FIVE STUDENTS WERE ALLEGEDLY INJURED WHEN CLUB-WIELDING TROOPS BROKE UP ANTI-DIRG DEMONSTRATIONS AT LATTER SCHOOL. ON THIS OCCASION AS WELL AS TWO OR THREE OTHERS, STUDENTS BROKE SCHOOL WINDOWS AND DESTROYED SOME SCHOOL PROPERTY INCLUDING DESKS AND BOOKS. STUDENTS AT THE ITEGUE MENEN GIRLS SCHOOL IN ADDIS WERE INVOLVED IN SEVERAL STONE-THROWING INCIDENTS DURING THE WEEK.

2. THIS WEEK COMMENCED IN APPROXIMATELY THE SAME FASHION WITH
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STUDENTS AT FREHIWOT JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL HOLDING A PROTEST

DEMONSTRATION AGAINST HIGH SCHOOL FEES. STUDENTS BROKE WINDOWS AND DESTROYED SCHOOL PROPERTY UNTIL DISPERSED BY TROOPS FIRING INTO THE AIR. A STUDENT DEMONSTRATION WAS HELD NEAR MENELIK SQUARE IN ADDIS, BUT WE HAVE NO FURTHER INFORMATION ON IT.

3. OVER WEEKEND EMBOFF TRAVELING TO AMBO, 120 KILOMETERS WEST OF ADDIS, SAW BUS ALONG ROAD WHICH HAD BEEN BURNED BY AMBO STUDENTS WHO HAD STOPPED BUS, FORCED PASSENGERS TO DISEMBARK, AND IGNITED WITH GASOLINEJS STUDENTS REPORTEDLY DAMAGED FOUR OTHER BUSES WHICH HAD TO BE TOWED BACK TO ADDIS.

4. COMMENT: A HIGH MININTERIOR SOURCE INFORMED US THAT AT LEAST THREE ADDIS SCHOOLS PER DAY HAVE BEEN DISRUPTED BY STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS. WE EXPECT THESE DEMONSTRATIONS TO CONTINUE AND PROBABLY EVEN SPREAD AS STUDENTS BECOME AWARE OF CURRENT GOVT INTENTIONS TO READMIT ONLY 600 STUDENTS (FORMERLY THERE WERE 5,000) TO ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY IN THE FALL. SECOND FACTOR EXACERBATING STUDENT SITUATION IS GOVT'S CONTINUED ATTEMPT TO COMPEL AWOL ZEMATCH TO RETURN TO NATIONAL WORK CAMPAIGN. IN THIS REGARD WE HAVE BEEN TOLD THAT ALTHOUGH SOME STUDENTS ARE RETURNING TO CAMPAIGN SERVICE, THEIR NUMBERS ARE MORE THAN OFFSET BY HIGHER RATE OF DEFECTION FROM RURAL SERVICE. WE JUDGE THAT CONTINUING INABILITY OF AUTHORITIES TO DEAL CONSTRUCTIVELY WITH STUDENT UNREST AND OPPOSITION IS POTENTIALLY SERIOUS MATTER. PARENTS OF STUDENTS ARE INCREASINGLY DISCUSSING WITH US THEIR CONCERN OVER IMPLICATIONS FOR THEIR CHILDREN'S AND NATION'S FUTURE OF "FOUR YEARS OF POLITICAL DISRUPTION" OF ETHIOPIA'S SCHOOLS. DIRG OF COURSE IS WELL AWARE OF ROLE PLAYED BY STUDENTS IN BRINGING DOWN OLD ORDER AND BOUND TO CONTEMPLATE CURRENT SPECTACLE OF WIDESPREAD STUDENT COMPARISON OF NEW WITH OLD DICTATORSHIP WITH DEEPENING UNEASY.
HUMMEL

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